Loharighat power project in Uttarakhand

†2285. SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BAL APTE:
SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS:

Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Bhagirathi would be made to flow through a tunnel, under the Loharighat Project to be built over the river Ganges in Uttarakhand;

(b) whether the very existence of the holy Bhagirathi would be in danger due to the same;

(c) whether environmentalists have expressed serious concerns over it; and

(d) whether Government is going to close this hydel power project due to the protest from these environmentalists and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) NTPC is constructing Loharinag Pala Hydro-electric Power Project (4×150 MW) across river Bhagirathi in Distt. Uttarkashi of Uttarakhand. With construction of Barrage at Loharinag, part of Bhagirathi river water is proposed to be diverted through a Head Race Tunnel and the same shall be released back into the river after power generation near Pala. Further, eleven perennial streams are joining the river Bhagirathi within the stretch of about 13.5 km between Barrage and Power House site. The first perennial stream joins at a distance of about 500m from the barrage. Adequate water from the dam is also proposed to be released continuously in order to ensure continuous flow. As such the holy Bhagirathi River shall not be in danger.

(c) and (d) Taking note of the concerns raised by some NGO's regarding construction of hydro power schemes on the river Ganga, the NTPC on 18.07.2008, on the direction of the Government, has constituted a High Level Expert Group to examine the various issues involved. The Group has been granted extension upto 31st December, 2008.

Coverage of RGGVY in naxal affected areas

†2286. SHRI SATYAVRAT CHATURVEDI:
SHRI MOTILAL VORA:

Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has decided to cover only those hamlets/residential areas under the Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojana (RGGVY), which have a population of 100 persons or more;

(b) whether it is a fact that the same rule is being followed in the naxal affected areas also, due to which in hamlets/ residential areas having a population of less than 100 persons turn into the shelter for naxalites, as these areas remain in the grip of darkness for want of electricity;

(c) if so, whether Government would relax this rule for extremism/naxal affected areas; and

(d) if so, by when?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) All un-electrified or de-electrified census villages, irrespective of their population and location, are

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.